

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 PM-04
NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 /059 W
-----191025Z 114748 /13

R 181630Z MAR 77

FM USMISSION USBERLIN

TO AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4246

AMEMBASSY BERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 0782

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, EAIR, PFOR, WB, UK, FR, US, UR

SUBJECT: CORRIDOR CLEARANCE FOR GOODYEAR ARISHIP

REF: (A) BONN 4651, (B) BONN 3965, (C) 76 BONN 4547,
(D) RANDOLPH/WIDDECOMBE LTR, 2/4/77

1. SUMMARY: WE BELIEVE BRITISH REASONS FOR WITH-
DRAWING CLEARANCE FOR AIRSHIP FLIGHT TO BERLIN
ARE INVLAID. MISSION RECOMMENDS EMBASSY BONN BE
AUTHORIZED TO CONTINUE SEEK BRITISH APPROVAL FOR
FLIGHT. END SUMMARY.

2. WE THINK ISSUES RAISED BY BRITISH IN WITH-
DRAWING CORRIDOR CLEARANCE FOR THE GOODYEAR AIR-
SHIP "EUROPA" (REF A) ARE INVALID. BASIC FOUR-POWER REGULATION
FOR FLIGHTS IN CORRIDORS AND BERLIN CONTROL ZONE
(DAIR/P(45)71 SECOND REVISE) SPECIFICALLY PROVIDES
FOR AIRSHIPS UNDER RIGHT-OF-WAY RULES. THEREFORE,
IT WAS LEARLY ENVISAGES AT TIME THAT REGULATIONS WAS APPROVED
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AIRSHIPS MIGHT FIND THEIR WAY TO BERLIN FROM TIME TO TIME. THUS,
AS EMBASSY HAS NOTED (REF B), WE HAVE FIRM LEGAL
BASIS TO JUSTIFY FLIGHT OF US AIRSHIP TO BERLIN.

3. WITH RESPECT TO BRITISH CONTENTION THAT TRIP IS
"NINETY PERCENT ADVERTISIN", AS NOTED IN REF B,
PRIMARY PURPOSE OF FLIGHT IS CALIBRATION OF

ANTENNAS FOR GERMAN TELEVISION STATION (SFB) IN BERLIN. AIRSHIP "EUROPA" HAS ALREADY PERFORMED THIS SERVICE FOR TV STATIONS ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE, INCLUDING FRG, AND IS THEREFORE A FAMILIAR SIGHT OVER MAJOR EUROPEAN CITIES. BRITISH SUGGESTION THAT AIRSHIP WOULD AROUSE SUSPICION IT MIGHT BE ON "RECONNAISSANCE" FLIGHT IS VINTAGE 1916. BRITISH SHOULD KNOW (SOVIETS CERTAINLY DO) THAT SLOW-FLYING AIRCRAFT ARE NO LONGER NEEDED TO CONDUCT HIGH QUALITY AERIAL SURVEILLANCE AND PHOTOGRAPH. (THERE ARE MORE THAN 70,000 ALLIED FLIGHTS A YEAR THROUGH CORRIDORS WHICH EQUALLY COULD BE ACCUSED OF CONDUCTING "RECONNAISSANCE".)

4. BRITISH ASSERTION THAT FLIGHT PURPOSE IS "NINETY PERCENT ADVERTISING" MAY BE REFLECTION OF THEIR LONG-STANDING OPPOSITION TO THE USE OF THE BCZ FOR REVENUE FLIGHTS (REF C). BRITISH OFTEN CONSIDER REVENUE FLIGHTS IN BERLIN CONTROL ZONE DETRIMENTAL TO THEIR OWN NATIONAL ECONOMIC INTEREST. FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN PANAM HAD CHARTERED (IN 1975) AN AIRCRAFT TO LOCAL BREWERY FOR HALF-HOUR SIGHT-SEEING FLIGHT IN BCZ WHICH WAS REWARD TO BREWERY EMPLOYEES FOR GOOD PERFORMANCE, BRITISH OPPOSED THE FLIGHT. ALTHOUGH THEY SUBSEQUENTLY RELENTED AND FLIGHT TOOK PLACE, BRITISH SINCE HAVE USED THEIR "ECONOMIC AUTHORITY" TO BLOCK SIMILAR FLIGHTS. THIS ECONOMIC AUTHORITY, AS DESCRIBED IN REF C, IS ONE OF TWO PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF CAA

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CLEARANCE, OTHER BEING AUTHORITY TO OPERATE WITHIN BCZ AND CORRIDORS. ECONOMIC AUTHORITY IS ESSENTIALLY AND ECONOMIC PERMIT GRANTING LIFT-OFF RIGHTS FROM WESTERN SECTORS OF BERLIN. WHILE THIS ECONOMIC AUTHORITY HAS BEEN USED IN PAST BY ONE OR ANOTHER OF ALLIES TO DEFEND THEIR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS OR POLITICAL VIEWPOINT, WE THINK USE BY BRITISH IN PRESENT CASE IS UNFAIR AND INVALID.

5. AFTER MISSION RECEIVED NOTIFICATION OF CAA APPROVAL OF AIRSHIP FLIGHT (REF D), BERLIN AERONAUTICS UNIT, IN COORDINATION WITH SNEAT, MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SHIPMENT TO BERLIN OF GROUND SUPPORT EQUIPMENT. LIAISON WITH SENAT, AS WELL AS INVOLVEMENT WITH GERMAN TV STATION, INEVITABLY LED TO CONSIDERABLE PUBLICITY IN ALL MEDIA ABOUT PROSPECTIVE VISIT TO BERLIN BY AIRSHIP "EUROPA". CONSIDERING THIS EXTENSIVE MEDIA COVERAGE, AND FACT THAT GOODYEAR AND SFB HAVE ALREADY AGREED FOR CRUISE OVER WEST BERLIN OFR

JOURNALISTS, ALLIES WOULD LOOK FOOLISH
IF AT THIS POINT THERE IS WITHDRAWAL OF "EUROPA"
FLIGHT CLEARANCE. WE DOUBT THAT WE COULD
PREVENT LEAKS TO MEDIA OVER REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL
WHICH WOULD RESULT IN UNDESIRABLE PUBLIC DISCUSSION
OF ALLIED DISPUTE. FURTHERMORE, IT INEVITABLY WILL BE
SUGGESTED THAT ALLIES WERE BACKING DOWN RATHER
THAN FACING POSSIBLE GDR OR SOVIET CRITICISM.

6. MISSION THEREFORE RECOMMENDS THAT DEPARTMENT
AUTHORIZE EMBASSY BONN TO GO BACK TO BRITISH AND
SEEK, ON BASIS OF FOREGOING ARGUMENTS, TO OBTAIN
PERMISSION FOR "EUROPA" FLIGHT. IN DISCUSSING
MATTER WITH BRITISH IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED THAT
AIRSHIP WILL NOT OVERFLY EAST BERLIN. GEORGE

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Message Attributes

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Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
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Film Number: D770129-1148
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